SCHOOLS

Winchester High School club hopes art contest will foster interest in Black history, culture

TAVISHI CHATTOPADHYAY | CORRESPONDENT

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From left to right, Naisha Ovinsky, vice president of Black Student Union, Carson Sarpong, president of BSU and Eric Gorman, secretary of BSU, tabling for their club. COURTESY PHOTO/CARSON SARPONG

When then-freshman Christie Clark approached Carson Sarpong becoming a co-founder for her club, Black Student Union, he was

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Three years later, Sarpong is the president, and the club has organized the Black History Project, a contest that invites students to create art about Black history and culture.

The idea for the Black History Project came when the club's secretary, Eric Gorman, emphasized the need to educate students to combat insensitive questions and comments.

The idea resonated with club members, including Sarpong, who recalled that when he moved to Winchester, his classmates initially asked him questions fueled by curiosity. But, as he got older, the questions became "more ignorant" and "intensive rather than curious."

"Ninety percent of [the jokes and comments] probably come from ignorance," Sarpong said. "Ten percent are actually either hate or supposed to be derogatory."

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BSU wants the competition's focus to be on the African diaspora to highlight Black culture outside of the United States.

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When brainstorming the contest, BSU members felt that most of their history education focused on either Eurocentric American or European history because of constraints on the curriculum. Other cultures' histories are often overlooked.

Gorman hopes the project will act as a "stepping stone" toward a more balanced curriculum.

The club hopes the Black History Project will highlight the parts of Black history that go unnoticed in the curriculum.

"There's a lot of good things that Black communities have done thus far, and we want to highlight that from our own standing, in our own voice," said Joel Aryee, a senior on the BSU's leadership team.

The contest accepts submissions ranging from visual art and literary works to multimedia pieces such as documentaries, websites and music.

So far, BSU has received four submissions. The club expects an additional 20 by the time submissions close Feb. 9. From then until Feb. 25, teachers will judge each piece, and a winner will be announced Feb. 25 at a community showcase at the Griffin Museum of Photography.

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Winners will receive Amazon gift cards, with the first-place winner receiving $250. Second place will receive $150 and third place $100.

Contestants are encouraged to base their submissions on thoroughly researched concepts. Submissions will be judged on their concept, creativity, composition, use of medium and their clear connectio
history and modern-day Black culture.

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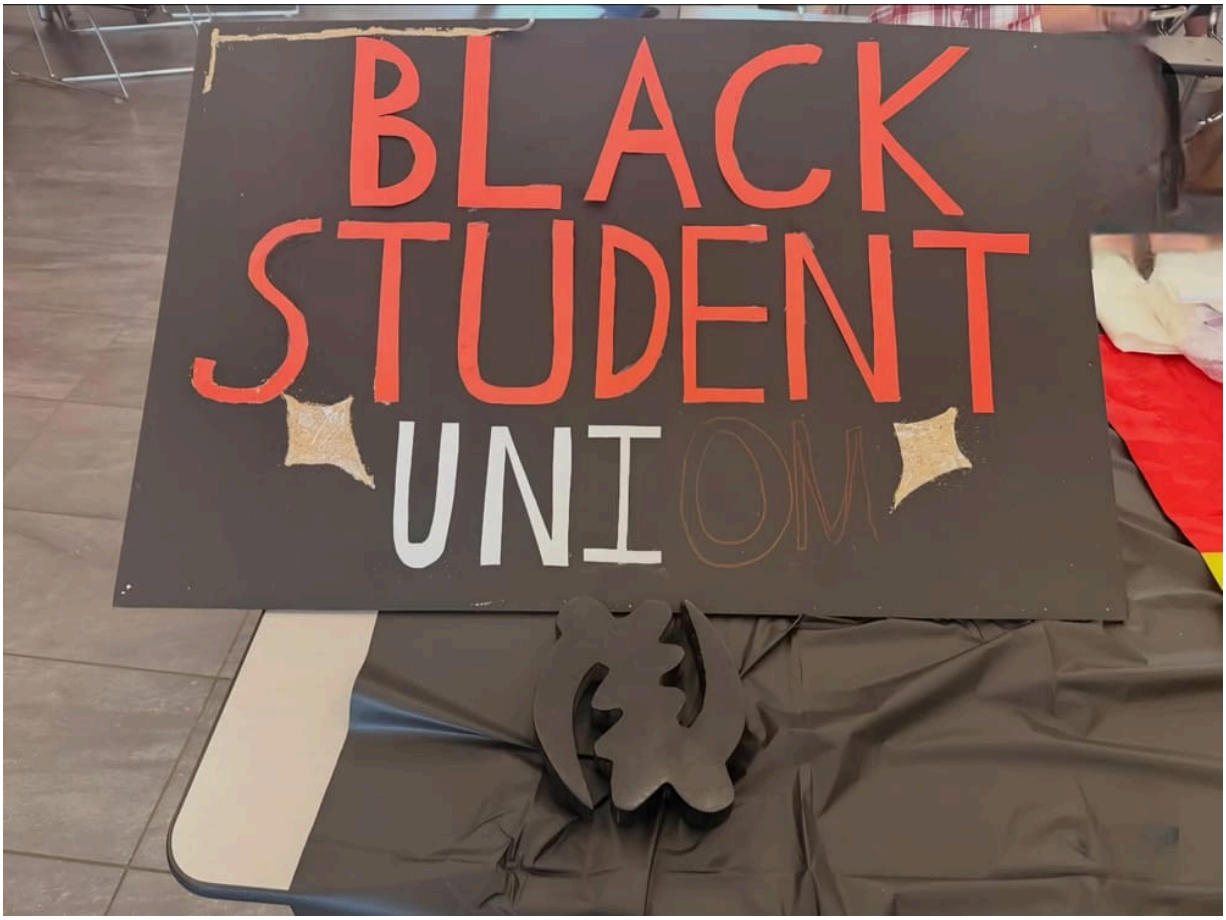
After the showcase, the projects will be displayed in both the Griffin Museum and the high school's art department.

Joe Aryee, a member of BSU's leadership team, said he hopes the submissions will allow people to "find their voice."



The Black Student Union's poster design. COURTESY PHOTO/CARSON SARPONG

Organizations in the community came together to help BSU with the competition. The Winchester Rotary Club provided the prize money, while the Network for Social Justice created the community showcase.

Craig Mackenzie, the club's faculty adviser, has seen the project come to life.

"Seeing [Carson's] work and the students he's working with try and [the school system] for the better has been the most enjoyable pa Mackenzie said.

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The club hopes the Black History Project will become an annual event and will connect students with BSU. Club members want to solidify BSU as a place where everyone is welcome.

As the due date for submissions inches closer, Sarpong and the rest of BSU are thrilled with how the competition has shaped up.

“To see it actually become something is really cool,” Sarpong said.

Tavishi Chattopadhyay is a journalism student at Boston University. This story is part of a partnership between Winchester News and the Boston University Department of Journalism.

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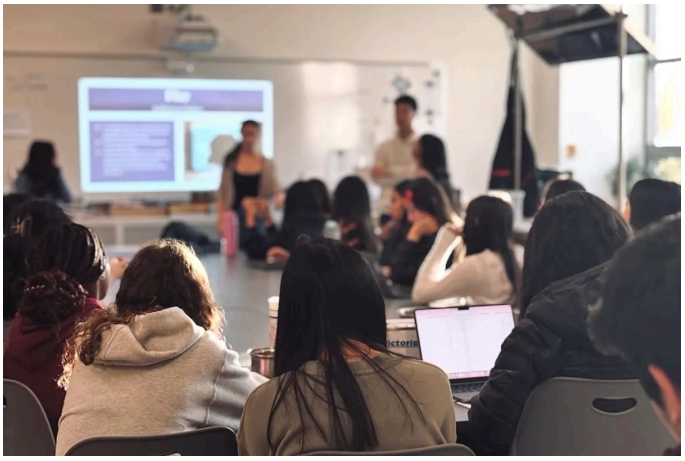

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Winchester High School's speech and debate team sees a meteoric rise

Winchester's speech and debate team, like most things, began with only a handful of students competing in its inaugural year and receiving little attention from the school. Yet now, what began as a modest club for fun, has grown into something significant and respected by the entire Massachusetts debate

XIYUE ERIC HAN | CORRESPONDENT

January 30, 2026

Winchester High School Athletic Department reschedules open house for 8th graders

The following was submitted by the Winchester High School Athletics Department: On Monday, Feb. 2, the Winchester High School Athletics Department will be hosting its rescheduled open house night for 8th graders from 6:30-8:30 p.m. in the auditorium. Come to an informational meeting, meet the coaches, learn

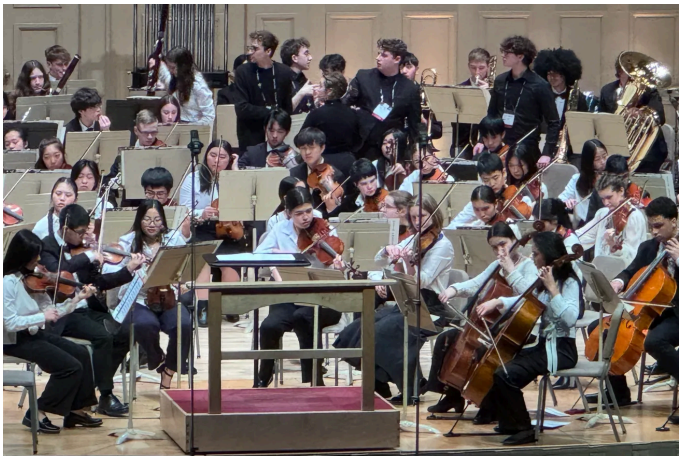
January 27, 2026

EVENTS

Winchester High School Black Student Union launches 'Black History Project' contest, community showcase

The following was submitted by the Black Student Union at Winchester High School: The Black Student Union (BSU) at Winchester High School (WHS) is proud to announce the launch of the Black History Project, a contest designed to foster education, research, and creative expression surrounding Black history and culture. The

January 14, 2026



SCHOOLS

Winchester students earn spots in competitive music festival

More than half of the Winchester High School students who auditioned for the Senior District Festival have been selected for the competitive music event. The Senior District Festival, hosted by the Massachusetts Music Educators Association Northeast District, is scheduled for Jan. 10, with the concert band and orchestra performing at

AAYUSHI DATTA | CORRESPONDENT

December 16, 2025

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FEATURES

‘Chicago: Teen Edition’ dances onto the Winchester High School stage

By Talia Ho | Correspondent Fame. Fortune. And all that jazz. This spring, Winchester High School presents “Chicago: Teen Edition,” a bold musical that explores celebrity culture, media manipulation, and the cost of ambition. Set in the 1920s, this iconic production is sure to leave the audience wanting more. Performances will

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March 4, 2026

EVENTS

Ripley Chapel in Winchester presents ‘Syldason: You Are Welcome Here’

The following was submitted by the Ripley Chapel at First Congregational Church: On Friday, March 13, beginning at 7:30 p.m., live in-person and live streamed from the stunning Ripley Chapel at First Congregational Church, Winchester, 21 Church St., join in with Syldason, a duo concert featuring Sylvie Zakarian,

March 4, 2026

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Rep. Michael Day helps House colleagues pass sweeping energy

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Winchester gun own training rules starting April 2

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affordability bill

The following was submitted by the Office of Rep. Michael S. Day: Rep. Michael S. Day and his colleagues in the House of Representatives recently passed energy affordability legislation that would result in over $9 billion in savings for utility ratepayers over the next 10 years. The bill maintains critical

March 4, 2026

Public safety data How Winchester compares on firearms licenses in comparable Massachusetts communities Active licenses as of Jan. 25, 2025 — Source: Massachusetts Criminal History Systems Board License to carry firearms Firearms identification card Winchester and Marblehead are the focus communities. Peers selected based on comparable population size, demographics and suburban

WILL DOWD | STAFF WRITER

March 4, 2026

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